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NEWS RELEASE

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Who Cares About Global Warming Anyway?

by: Senator Larry Craig

If you remember Al Gore's Oscar-winning movie and his visit to Boise, you might be shocked to learn how the Democrat-led Congress actually handled an issue some say is the most important crisis of our time. You may not even have known this debate was going on, considering how disorganized, brief and superficial the debate was.

Let me say at the outset that I have spent an enormous amount of time on the issue of reducing our greenhouse gases without increasing energy prices at the pump or on your electricity bill. Last year I offered 46 amendments to Sen. Boxer's climate change bill when it was reviewed by the Committee on Environment and Public Works. These were serious amendments addressing various aspects of this lengthy, complicated bill, yet all but one of my amendments – calling for a study – were rejected. Chairman Boxer claimed at the time that amendments to manage our forests, promote nuclear energy, or protect consumers from high energy prices should be saved for the Senate floor debate.

Now we know why: after a couple of days for political posturing to the environmental community, Majority Leader Harry Reid used his leadership privileges to block amendments and limit debate, and then pulled the bill from further consideration.

To put this in context, consider that back in 1990, the Senate spent five weeks on the Clean Air legislation and dealt with 180 amendments. Today's global warming bill dramatically exceeded the Clean Air Act in scope and impact, yet efforts to explore the consequences of this far-reaching legislation were cut off after only a few hours of discussion, and without allowing any debate or votes on amendments to the bill.

The exercise that the Senate went through this week has become commonplace for this increasingly dysfunctional Congress. Debates begin with the press releases already written; legislating has become an afterthought. This is particularly disappointing for those of us who have spent time learning the issues and working on constructive

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policies, in the belief that Congress has a responsibility to offer solutions for the problems that plague our country.

For those of us who do support finding meaningful and responsible ways to reduce greenhouse gases, I regret the Senate's performance. I would also encourage you to watch my forestry and gas price speeches on the issue and to read the amendments I tried to offer at my website: craig.senate.gov/climate

There are also actions to reduce greenhouse gases that you and your family can take. For instance, you can reduce the amount of fuel you use – helping both your wallet and the environment. I've found many helpful fuel-saving ideas at www.drivesmarterchallenge.org, a website maintained by the non-partisan Alliance to Save Energy on whose board I sit. If all U.S. drivers followed just one of these suggestions to reduce our driving by 5%, we could save more than \$24 billion worth of gasoline, sending fewer dollars to foreign cartels, keeping more money in your pocketbook, and – oh, yes: putting fewer greenhouse gases into our environment... for those of us who care.